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Rallies were held around the state on Saturday, Sept. 1, marking an organized protest against the Northern Pass Transmission Line project proposed by Northeast Utilities and Hydro-Quebec. The project is looking to install 180-miles of transmission line and towers from the northwest border of New Hampshire down through to Deerfield, where it would enter the New England grid.

When the proposal was announced almost two years ago, a protest formed quickly and largely. Since then, it has grown to include thousands of residents and property owners from throughout New Hampshire and from other New England states as well.

Last weekend, the unified protest—called Hands Across New Hampshire—was held in towns throughout the state. In Colebrook, almost 200 dressed in orange—the color the protestors have chosen to wear—surrounded the Colebrook town park on Bridge Street. Julie Moran opened the protest with some words of encouragement for landowners who have refused to sell property to the Northern Pass project. "We all came to oppose the Northern Pass project," she said, thanking everyone for taking time out from their holiday weekend to take part in the protest.

Landowners who have not sold to the Northern Pass project were recognized and thanked for standing steadfast. They included Mike Keezer, Dave Chase, Lynne Placey and the MacAllister family. (Of the 43 properties that have been purchased to-date by Northern Pass LLC, only 10 were owned by residents who live in the region, and only one resident actually lived on the property that was sold.)

Before the speakers and before the protest march, an invocation was given by the Rev. Granvyl "Bud" Hulse, Jr., who wrote his own prayer for the occasion. "Give us the strength to resist the forces that would destroy your beautiful creation for the sole purpose of monetary greed," said Hulse in his prayer. "With your mighty power, protect us from the self-serving intentions of those who value money over integrity of the land and care nothing for those who live on it and depend on it."

In his talk with the protestors, Congressman Charlie Bass said, "I don't think I've heard a better invocation to God in my life—that was fantastic." Bass also applauded the landowners who have not sold out to the transmission line project, saying, "You folks are real heroes. It's not easy to live in the North Country, and to make a sacrifice like the one you all are making will be remembered for many, many generations. I know this project is not going to go through—and when we win, we need to do more to make sure people don't forget the sacrifices that these families have made."

Bass also said he was "embarrassed" about having to meet at a protest against the hydro project. "I'm embarrassed because I'm proud of alternative energy and electric generation and

economic development—I'm embarrassed because it isn't fair; it is taking advantage of good people who live in an area where it's tough to get by, and the developers seem to be doing everything they possibly can to do it the wrong way rather than the right way. We are not going to move on this issue until you people in this crowd say it's time to do it the way you want it, not the way they want it," said Bass.

Executive Councilor Ray Burton reflected on first hearing about the transmission line project and told the crowd, "I'm very proud as one of the first public officials, on Dec. 27, 2010, to publicly say to Public Service Co. of N.H. and Hydro- Quebec to take your tent and go home," he said to applause. Burton recognized all of the members of Congress and local Representatives for the work they have done in their legislatures to fight the transmission line project. "And thank you," he told the crowd, "for showing up as Americans and letting people know how you feel about a cause in rural America at its tory best."

State Rep. Larry Rappaport told everyone, "I think we're going to win—no, I know we're going to win," followed by State Rep. Duffy Daugherty who agreed with Rep. Rappaport, saying, "I respect the resisters and I respect all of you for showing up. We are going to win this fight."

Following the speakers, the protestors organized into a march, walking from the park down Main Street in Colebrook— where numerous motorists stopped to wave and show their support for the protest. They then crossed the road and walked back up Main Street, returning to the park, where everyone joined in on a song written by Moran as a protest to the project while the Live Free or Free committee handed out bumper stickers and Live Free or Fry buttons. The protest was organized by many individuals, including Moran, Bob Baker, Rick Samson, Bill Schomburg, and Rick Johnsen, and the Live Free or Fry and No Northern Pass coalitions.